

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOH CAUTIONS TO AVOID TATTOO PARTIES AND UNLICENSED ACTIVITY

CENTRAL FLORIDA - The Florida Departments of Health in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake and Volusia counties encourage residents to only use licensed tattoo artists when getting tattoos and body art. Residents are also advised to avoid participating in local tattoo parties where unlicensed activity is common.

"Tattoo parties are events where someone hires an unlicensed person or business to provide tattoos for their guests," said Dr. Kevin Sherin, director of the Florida Department of Health in Orange County. "They often occur inside homes or hotel rooms using inexperienced artists and they are very popular with minors looking for an inexpensive tattoo without their parent's consent." These types of unlicensed events are illegal in Florida.

"It is important for people who are seeking tattoos to use licensed artists for their own well-being," said Dr. Bonnie J. Sorensen, director of the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County. "Unlicensed tattoo activity may take place under unsanitary conditions such as not wearing protective gloves and using unsterile equipment. It is better to use a licensed professional."

Re-using needles and sharing ink between customers is common. Sometimes ink may not be safe for the skin.

Unlicensed tattoo activity could result in the following complications:

- **Allergic reactions.** Tattoo dyes — especially red, green, yellow and blue dyes — can cause allergic skin reactions, such as an itchy rash at the tattoo site. This can occur even years after the tattoo is placed.
- **Skin infections.** Life-threatening skin infection, including MRSA, is a possibility. Infections could cause redness, swelling, pain and a pus-like drainage.
- **Other skin problems.** Sometimes bumps called granulomas form around tattoo ink. Tattooing can also lead to keloids — raised areas caused by an overgrowth of scar tissue.
- **Bloodborne and other diseases.** Tetanus, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV are some of the diseases that can be transmitted by contaminated blood on unsterilized equipment.

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Tattoo Safety Tips

- Never get tattooed in someone's house or in a hotel room.
- Only go to permitted and inspected shops that only hire licensed tattoo artists
- Before anybody touches you, ask to see their artist license. All persons tattooing in Florida are required to have a current artist license from the Florida Department of Health.
- Verify that only new needles are being used and that unused ink is discarded after the tattoo is over.
- Look to see that your artist washes their hands and sanitizes their work surface prior to starting. They should also be wearing gloves and using protective barriers on equipment and work surfaces while doing your tattoo.
- When the tattoo is finished, reputable artists will provide you with proper healing instructions. Make sure you follow them to avoid complications.

Anyone who believes they have contracted an illness related to a tattoo at a tattooing party, please contact your private physician and the nearest health department location.

For more information, please visit www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-environments/tattooing/index.html

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